
Status & Remarks

The application presently contains the following claims:

| <i>Independent Claim #</i> | <i>Dependent Claim #s</i> |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | 2-35 |
| 37 | 38-58 |

Claims 59-68 are canceled in this amendment, the claims being directed to a non-elected invention while claim 37 is amended.

The Examiner has represented that claims 1-36 are allowable.

FIGS. 17-21 are added by this amendment response. Support for FIG. 17 can be found with reference to claim 8 as originally filed. Support for FIGS. 18-19 is found with reference to paragraph [0014] wherein it states "larger numbers of entrapped connectors are envisioned within the scope of the invention, e.g., four through n wherein n is an integral value which is appropriate for a predefined length of tubing ..." Support for FIGS. 20-21 are found with reference to paragraphs [0031] and [0032].

Support for the amendments made to the Specification can be found as follows:

- (1) For the Abstract, the deletions are per the request of the examiner;
- (2) For paragraphs [0010] and [0011], the amendments are for purposes of readability;
- (3) For paragraphs [0014], [0031] and [0032], the amendments are for purposes of referencing the newly added figures, the support for which can be found in the paragraphs themselves.

Support for the amendments made to Claim #37 may be found with reference to FIGS. 1-2 as originally filed.

In the Drawings

The examiner has objected to the drawings under 37 C.F.R. §1.83(a). The examiner

represented that the drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. The examiner did not find the subject matter of claims 8, 13-16, 19-22, 25-28, 31-34 and 58 in the drawings and therefore requested that either the features be shown or canceled from the claims.

With respect to claim #8, the applicant would respectfully direct the examiner's attention to newly submitted FIG. 17 which clearly shows the limitations found in dependent claim #8, namely two oppositely facing end connectors and two oppositely facing internal connectors.

With respect to claim #13, the applicant would respectfully direct the examiner's attention to originally filed FIG. 2 which clearly shows the limitations found in dependent claim #13, namely two end connectors and at least three internal connectors.

With respect to claim #14, the applicant would respectfully direct the examiner's attention to newly submitted FIG. 18 which clearly shows the limitations found in dependent claim #14, namely that the four geometries of the sealing surfaces be essentially identical.

With respect to claim #15, the applicant would respectfully direct the examiner's attention to originally filed FIG. 2 which clearly shows at least one out of the five possible sealing surfaces is of a different geometry.

With respect to claim #16, the applicant would respectfully direct the examiner's attention to originally filed FIG. 2 which clearly shows a connector having at least three different sealing geometries.

With respect to claim #19, the applicant would respectfully direct the examiner's attention to originally filed FIG. 2 which clearly shows the limitations found in dependent claim #19, namely two end connectors and at least four internal connectors.

With respect to claim #20, the applicant would respectfully direct the examiner's attention to FIG. 18 which clearly shows a connector having essentially identical sealing surfaces for at least six connectors through the recognition of the fact that at least one of n, m or p must be 2.

With respect to claim #21, the applicant would respectfully direct the examiner's

attention to originally filed FIG. 2 which clearly shows the limitations found in dependent claim #21, namely that at least one sealing surface of the six connectors has a different geometry.

With respect to claim #22, the applicant would respectfully direct the examiner's attention to originally filed FIG. 2 which clearly shows at least three different sealing surfaces.

With respect to claim #25, the applicant would respectfully direct the examiner's attention to newly submitted FIG. 19 wherein at least seven connectors is illustrated by the recognition that the values for a, b, c, d and e is 1 or combinations thereof.

With respect to claim #26, the applicant would respectfully direct the examiner's attention to newly submitted FIG. 18 which clearly shows a connector having essentially identical sealing surfaces for at least seven connectors through the recognition of the fact that at least two of n, m or p must be 2 or combinations thereof.

With respect to claim #27, the applicant would respectfully direct the examiner's attention to newly submitted FIG. 19 which clearly shows that at least one of the seven sealing surfaces is different.

With respect to claim #28, the applicant would respectfully direct the examiner's attention to newly submitted FIG. 19 which clearly shows at least three different sealing surfaces.

With respect to claim #31, the applicant would respectfully direct the examiner's attention to newly submitted FIG. 19 wherein at least eight connectors is illustrated by the recognition that the value for one of a, b, c, d and e is 2 and the other integral values are at least 1 or combinations thereof.

With respect to claim #32, the applicant would respectfully direct the examiner's attention to newly submitted FIG. 18 which clearly shows a connector having essentially identical sealing surfaces for at least eight connectors through the recognition of the fact that at least three of n, m or p must be 2 or combinations thereof.

With respect to claim #33, the applicant would respectfully direct the examiner's

attention to newly submitted FIG. 19 which clearly shows that at least one of the eight sealing surfaces is different.

With respect to claim #34, the applicant would respectfully direct the examiner's attention to newly submitted FIG. 19 which clearly shows at least three different sealing surfaces.

With respect to claim #58 (and/or #57), the applicant would respectfully direct the examiner's attention to newly submitted FIGS. 20-21.

35 USC §102

The examiner has rejected claims 37-39, 43-44 and 57-58 under this section, subparagraph (b) as being anticipated by Stickler and provided various reasons therefore. The applicant's attorney has amended claim #37 in light of the thoughtful positions advanced by the examiner.

In particular, claim #37 has been amended to focus on the "coaxial" nature of the internal connectors with regard to the overall tube. This is nowhere seen in Stickler, which illustrates a traditional "T-shaped" connector.

35 USC §103

The examiner has rejected claims 40-42 and 45-56 as being rendered obvious under this section, subparagraph (a) and advanced various reasons therefore. The applicant's attorney would respectfully request the examiner reconsider his position in light of the following arguments.

Stickler teaches a connector having three connections which involve a "T-shaped" arrangement as discussed before. However, there is no teaching, nor is it possible to modify Stickler which would permit an internal connector to be injection overmolded coaxial to the longitudinal axis of the tube AND have a coaxial fastening means. Stickler is clear in that the third connector means is oriented perpendicular or normal to the longitudinal axis of

the tube. It took out-of-the-box thinking of Rowley to break the mold of traditional "T-shaped" geometries.

Request for Reconsideration

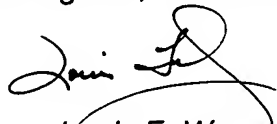
Applicant believes that all independent claims clearly define over the prior art and that the distinctions between the present invention and the prior art would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art. Additionally, the remaining dependent claims, by the limitations contained in the base independent claims, are felt to be patentable over the prior art by virtue of their dependency from independent claims which distinguish over the prior art of record. All pending claims are thought to be allowable and reconsideration by the Examiner is respectfully requested.

It is respectfully submitted that no new additional searching will be required by the examiner. A fee determination sheet is attached for this amendment response. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fee required to effect the filing of this document to Account No. 50-0983.

It is respectfully submitted that all references identified by the examiner have been distinguished in a non-obvious way. If the examiner believes that a telephonic conversation would facilitate a resolution of any and/or all of the outstanding issues pending in this application, then such a call is cordially invited at the convenience of the examiner.

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Respectfully Submitted,
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